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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/806,798	03/23/2004	Dave Whitmer	3047-05	2893

37101 7590 08/23/2005

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EXAMINER

KENNEDY, JOSHUA T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3679

DATE MAILED: 08/23/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/806,798	Applicant(s) WHITMER, DAVE	
	Examiner Joshua T. Kennedy	Art Unit 3679	<i>JK</i>

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 23 March 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 March 2004 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-7 have been examined.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the explicit connection of the sleeve to the cookware, the rotation limitation of 20-60 degrees, and interaction of the latch pin with the cookware must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. Each drawing sheet submitted after the filing date of an application must be labeled in the top margin as either "Replacement Sheet" or "New Sheet" pursuant to 37 CFR 1.121(d). If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

Claim Objections

Claim 5 is objected to because of the following informalities: Line 1 of Claim 5 should read -- wherein said semi-circular --. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections. See MPEP § 2172.01. The omitted structural cooperative relationships are: the explicit connection of the sleeve to the cookware, the relationship between the collar and shaft, the rotation limitation of 20-60 degrees, the detachability from cookware, and where the return spring of claim 4 is integrally placed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Netznik (US Patent 4,635,327).

As to Claim 1. Netznik discloses a locking apparatus for cookware with two opposing surfaces comprising:

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a stationary sleeve (50) with a handle (56) positioned at the end;

a stationary pin (16) with a positioning collar (18);

a semi-circular collar (66) accommodating a rotation limiting latch pin (62) and shoulder stop (50E; Examiner considers the recessed portions of the housing as shoulder stops—limiting the rotation of the latch pin while having enough space (hence accommodating) for the collar to slide in and out of the housing) wherein said semi-circular collar is interlocked with said stationary pin (Fig 1);

a round shaft (58) accommodating lateral movement limiting rings (50F, 66; Examiner considers the collar and the reduced annular opening at one end of the sleeve to be limiting the lateral movement of the shaft);

wherein said shaft is inserted through said stationary sleeve (Fig 3); and

However, Netznik does not disclose said stationary sleeve being attached to one opposing cookware surface. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use the quick disconnect locking coupler of Netznik for easily locking cookware closed because the locking coupler provides a secure means for coupling first and second structures (such as two pieces of cookware) which may be easily engaged and disengaged using only one hand (Col 1, Lines 27-31). A recitation with respect to the manner in which an apparatus is intended to be employed does not impose any structural limitation upon the claimed apparatus, which differentiates it from a prior art reference disclosing the structural limitations of the claim. In re Pearson, 494 F.2d 1399, 181 USPQ 641 (CCPA 1974); In re Yanush, 477 F.2d 958, 177 USPQ 705 (CCPA 1973); In re Finsterwalder, 436 F.2d 1028, 168 USPQ 530 (CCPA 1971); In re

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Casey, 370 F.2d 576, 152 USPQ 235 (CCPA 1967); In re Otto, 312 F.2d 937, 136

USPQ 458 (CCPA 1963); Ex parte Masham, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (BdPatApp & Inter 1987).

As to Claim 2. Netznik discloses the handle (56) capable of lifting one opposing cookware surface away from the other opposing cookware surface.

As to Claim 3. Netznik discloses said semi-circular collar being a circular collar (66).

As to Claim 4. Netznik discloses a return spring (60).

As to Claim 5. Netznik discloses said semi-circular collar being comprised of circular collar (66) accommodating a rotation limiting latch pin (62) and two shoulder stops (50E), wherein one of said shoulder stop limits movement of said shaft in the counter-clockwise direction and the other said shoulder stop limits movement of said shaft in the clockwise direction (Fig 6).

As to Claim 6. Netznik discloses the rotation of said handle being in the range of approximately 20 degrees and 60 degrees (Figs 4 and 6).

As to Claim 7. Netznik discloses said locking apparatus being detachable from the cookware (Col. 1 Lines 10-12: "...easily engaged and disengaged...").

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

US 6,726,393 to Tsai et al cited to show a similar connecting device utilizing a return spring.

US 4,986,690 to Cooksey cited to show a similar connecting device utilizing a return spring to quickly connect and disconnect structures.

US 4,679,959 to Cavallaro cited to show a similar connecting device utilizing a return spring to quickly connect and disconnect structures.

US 4,997,218 to Culling cited to show a similar connecting device utilizing a return spring with a rotation interaction using pins.

US 6,450,361 to Mendelson cited to show a connecting device for cookware utilizing latches to lock two pieces of cookware together

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joshua T. Kennedy whose telephone number is (571) 272-8297. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 7am - 3:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571) 272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel P. Stodola". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

JTK
8/9/2005

DANIEL P. STODOLA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600